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INTRODUCTION

Students undertaking undergraduate paramedicine education are often searching for ways to further their academic development and cultivate desirable employability skills. Although research is an enriching opportunity to achieve these goals, it remains an emerging field within paramedicine, and there are minimal opportunities for undergraduate students to partake in research projects. The literature identifies that whilst undergraduate student paramedics are often willing to volunteer as participants in simulated training for data collection, evidence of student research assistants and student-led research projects in paramedicine is limited [1].

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

Improving engagement in research is critically important in enhancing the research field and subsequent professional knowledge base within paramedicine. Students must therefore take the initiative to engage in extracurricular research projects with guidance from academic mentors.



Figure 1. Participant data collection

BENEFITS OF STUDENT RESEARCH INVOLVEMENT

- Networking opportunities
- Development of clinical knowledge
- Academic research and writing skills
- Exploring alternate career pathways



Figure 2. Control room at simulation training facility

SKILLS GAINED

Through working in research, we have acquired critical thinking, communication and research skills which are advantageous to our future clinical practice. We now appreciate the sources of evidence that underpin the clinical guidelines within professional paramedic practice, and the process by which this evidence is created.



Figure 3. Physiological monitoring devices

OUR EXPERIENCE

As students enrolled in the second year of a paramedicine degree, we have volunteered as undergraduate research assistants in a paramedicine-specific research project. This current project involves data collection and analysis using an innovative physiological recording device. The pathway to this project involved approaching a research-active paramedicine academic who is known for encouraging student-led projects within paramedicine.

Our experience has not been solely limited to the academic components of research, namely literature reviews and report writing. We have also engaged in further networking opportunities that have allowed us to interact with a diverse array of experts and technology in various settings. These include stunt performers, experienced paramedics, and law enforcement officers in advanced simulation training facilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on our experiences, we aim to encourage more engagement among undergraduate paramedicine students within the research field. Ultimately, students will not only develop the competence for prospective self-led projects, but also acquire skills that will guide their professional career.

REFERENCE

1. Lim, D., Grant-Wakefield, C., & Tippett, V. (2014). Engaging paramedic students in research: A case report. *Australasian Journal of Paramedicine*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.33151/ajp.11.4.3>